

MARK TWAIN JOURNAL

To Cyril Clemens
a worthy descendant
of Mark Twain -
who brought light
to all our lives
Thank you
J. F. Kennedy

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY'S TRIBUTE TO MARK TWAIN

A NOTE TO THE PRESIDENT

Michael H. Kennedy

Being President of the United States is perhaps the most difficult job in the world. The safeguarding of all Americans in their dealings with other countries is just one of his tasks. It takes a man possessed of all the virtues God has put at his disposal. The most important are love and truthfulness. Love, because without it, man can do nothing. First a love of God, and then a love of fellow men. Truth, because its absence breeds disaster. All goals can be obtained by truth and love.

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CYRIL CLEMENS, *Editor-in-Chief*

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Beginning in early boyhood, I have read virtually everything of Mark Twain's that has been published, and I have always been a great admirer of both the man and his work.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Best wishes for continous achievement in perpetuating Mark Twain's memory.

General Omar N. Bradley

I am still telling Mark Twain stories.

Harry S. Truman

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Our next issue will be a memorial to Ernest Hemingway who joined the Mark Twain Society April 6, 1930

My Friend Mark Twain

Sir Harry Brittain

There can be but few of us left who have enjoyed the great privilege of acting as host to that most delightful, unforgettable, humorous American, of whom one could truly say—to know him was to love him.

I had been married about a year, and my dear lady and I were fortunate in possessing an old house just behind Westminster Abbey, dating back to about 1680, covered with a glorious Virginia creeper, well over a hundred years old, and as an additional picturesque asset, an eighteenth century "powder closet" in which the male visitors of that day were re-powdered before entering the drawingroom.

In our comparatively small dining-room, we were able to entertain no more than a dozen at dinner, but this was an occasion on which we thought we ought to spread ourselves. On receiving an acceptance from our famous guest-to-be, and feeling that so many of our good friends would like to meet him, we launched forth at the old Savoy Hotel at a large round table for a party of thirty or forth.

It was a most memorable evening for our grand old guest was in his most irresistible form. On more than one occasion conversation stopped, while stories inimitably told in his quiet appealing drawl, fascinated every listener.

He sat, of course, on my wife's right-hand; on her left, I put one of our most brilliant speakers—Lord Curzon of Kedleston, a famous Viceroy of India, and husband of a well known American lady.

That dinner didn't break up until a very late hour, and even then, each and all of our guests left reluctantly.

A day or two later, my wife received a large life-like portrait, on which was inscribed a more than charming message to us both for the little hospitality we were so ready to give, while at the top of the portrait was a text entirely Twainesque—

"To be good is noble,
to teach others to be good
is nobler still—
and less trouble."

Now, the main reason of this visit of Mark Twain, was to receive from Oxford, the

Honorary Degree of D.C.L.—the greatest gift which my old University can offer. It goes without saying that Mark Twain took Oxford by storm. He then descended on London where we Pilgrims of Great Britain welcomed him at a Luncheon, which none of us who were present, ever will forget.

Having had a hand in bringing the Pilgrims into being in the far off days of 1902, I was still at the wheel; our President in those days was the great Field Marshal, Earl Roberts of Kandahar. In a talk with him before the luncheon took place, I suggested that we should invite one of our greatest British humorists to preside on this occasion, to which Lord Roberts readily agreed. So I put forward the name of the Rt. Hon. Augustine Birrell, a Cabinet Minister at the time, whose wit proved exactly the type to draw out the best from our guest, resulting in a most entrancing address.

Congratulating him on this delightful talk, he replied, "My dear Harry, if on each occasion when I had to speak I could follow a man such as your Mr. Birrell, I really think I could be always funny."

After Mark Twain had left, I wrote the following for the Pilgrims' archives:

During the first visit to England, Mr. Clemens was received with an affectionate welcome which increased in intensity during his stay. At our own particular gathering there was, of course, the greatest possible enthusiasm, but mingled with that, the feeling that each one of us was welcoming a very dear friend. As one of the papers had it, "Mark Twain is enjoying himself. No one who saw him at the lunch given in his honor by the Pilgrims at the Savoy can have any doubt as to that. His gleaming and beaming countenance, more picturesque than ever, radiated fun and happiness all round the room. What a wonderful old head it is, with its aquiline eye, and its leonine jaw and mane. The Pilgrims might almost adopt it as a symbol of that co-mingling of British Lion and American Eagle which they exist to promote."

Over the initials O. S., Owen Seaman of Punch, had written for us the following lines which we attached to the list of guests:

Pilot of many pilgrims since the shout
Mark Twain, that served you for a deathless
sign,

On Mississippi's waterway rang out
Over the plummet line;
Still where the countless ripples laugh above
The blue Halcyon seas, long may you keep
Your course unbroken, buoyed upon a love
Ten thousands fathoms deep.

And at the end of the list were these lines:
He lit our lives with shafts of sun
And vanquished pain.
Thus two great nations stand as one
In honouring Twain.

The little effort was anonymous.

The menu card was adorned with a scene on the Mississippi River with a steamboat forging along. In the foreground was the figure of Mark Twain, in Pilgrims' garb, with a huge quill for a staff, and a jumping frog in leash. The Undergraduates of Oxford, where he was to receive a degree, sent him a telegram which read, "Even if the weather is in Clement our welcome will be warm," and the American Pilgrims cabled a wish to join in tribute to that champion dispenser of sunshine and good cheer, known to gods and mortals as Mark Twain.

Augustine Birrell in a delightful speech which dealt with authors generally, living and dead, suggested that it was far more difficult to be good to the living author than to patronize the dead, that was why we were all so rejoiced to be able to do honour to a great living author, whom we all affectionately loved and admired. "I know," said Birrell, "no wiser maxim of behaviour than this 'love me and tell me so.'"

"We all love Mark Twain, and are here to tell him so. In America his *Huckleberry Finn* and his *Tom Sawyer* are what *Robinson Crusoe* and *Tom Brown's Schooldays* have been to us. They are racy of the soil, I remember in Liverpool in 1867 first buying the copy, which I still preserve, of the celebrated *Jumping Frog*, and in the few words of the preface, it reminded me that our guest in those days was called 'the wild humorist of the Pacific slopes,' and a few lines later down 'the moralist of the Main.' That was some forty years ago. Here he is, still the humorist, still the moralist. His humor enlivens and enlightens his morality, and his morality is

all the better for his humor. That is one of the reasons why we love him."

Mark Twain, after thanking the undergraduates of Oxford and the Pilgrims of America for their kind messages, said, "Mr Birrell says he does not know how he got here. He will be able to get away all right. He has not drunk anything since he arrived."

After saying that he hoped Mr Birrell was going to tell the Pilgrims what effect their guest's books had upon his growing manhood, but with the discretion born of Parliamentary experience, he had neatly dodged that point, Mark Twain went on to say, "My books have had effect—perhaps good effect here and there—and in other cases not so good. I remember one monumental instance years and years ago.

Professor Norton of Harvard was once over in England and when he returned to Boston, I went out with Mr. Howell to call on him. Norton, who was allied in some way by marriage with Darwin, was very gentle in what he had to say, and almost delicate.

"Mr. Clemens," said he, "I have been spending some time with Mr. Darwin in England, and I should like to tell you something connected with that visit. You were the object of it, and I myself would have been very proud, but you may not be so proud of it. At any rate, I am going to tell you what it was and leave it to you. Mr. Darwin took me up to his bedroom, and pointed out certain things there, pitcher-plants that he was measuring and watching from day to day. Then he added, 'The maid is permitted to do what she pleases in this room, but she must never touch those plants, and never touch those books on the table by the candle—with those books I read myself to sleep every night. Those were your own books!'"

Mark Twain continued, "There is no question in my mind as to whether I should regard that as a compliment—I do regard it as a great compliment and a high honour, that that great mind, labouring for the whole human race rested itself on my books. I am proud that he should have read himself to sleep with them". "Then," continued he, "as soon as I got home to Hartford, I called on my oldest friend and dearest enemy, the Rev.

Joseph Twitchell, my pastor, told him the story, and of course, he was full of interest and venom. He went off and did not issue any applause of any kind; I did not hear of the subject for some time, but when Mr. Darwin passed away, and some time later Darwin's life and letters came out, the Reverend Mr. Twitchell secured an early copy of the work, and found something at once that he considered applied to me. He came over to my house—it was snowing, raining and sleeting, but made no difference to Twitchell—produced the book, turned it over until he came to a place where he said, "Here, look at this letter from Mr. Darwin to Sir Joseph Hooker." What Mr. Darwin said was this:

"I do not know whether I ought to have devoted my whole life to those drudgeries in natural history and the other sciences, for while I may have gained in one way, I have lost in another. Once I had a fine perception and appreciation of high literature, but in me now that quality is atrophied."

"That" said Mr. Twitchell, "is from reading your books."

Mark Twain then told us how, when he arrived in England, the first thing he saw was a newspaperman going around with a great red, highly displayed placard in front of him. He was selling newspapers, and there were two sentences on the placard, which would have been all right if they had been punctuated, but they ran these two sentences together without even a comma, which of course created a wrong impression, because it said:

Mark Twain Arrives

Ascot Gold Cup Stolen

"I have never seen that cup, I have not the cup, I did not have a chance to get it." And then, after a few words on the wickedness of stealing, he said, "I do confess that when I was here several years ago, I stole a hat, but it did not amount to anything, it was not a good hat, and was only a clergyman's hat, anyway. I was at a luncheon party, and Archdeacon Wilberforce was there also. He is Archdeacon now—he was just a Canon then, and was serving in the Westminster battery, if that is the proper term. He left the luncheon table before I did. He began this thing. I did

steal his hat, but he began by taking mine. I make that confession because I will not accuse Archdeacon Wilberforce of stealing my hat—I should not think of it. I confine that phrase to myself. He merely took my hat and with good judgment too—it was a better hat than his."

And then from gay, Mark Twain turned to grave, and in serious vein gripped his audience in touching upon some of the sorrows which he and so many another had borne in life.

"So," he added, I must sometimes lay the cap and bells aside. Since I have been over here, I have received hundreds of letters from all conditions of people in England, men, women, and children, with compliment and praise in them all, but above all, there is a note of affection. Praise is well, but affection, that is the last and final and most precious reward any man can desire, whether in character or achievement. These letters make me feel, in England, as in America, that when I stand under the English flag, I am not a stranger, not an alien, but at home."

I saw a great deal of Mark Twain during that last visit to England, and, like all who knew him, soon came to love him. He stayed at Brown's Hotel in Dover Street, and I well remember one morning, invited by him to breakfast at about 9:30 with three or four other men. I enjoyed his delightful companionship, and listened to his wonderful reminiscences as he slowly drawled on from one yarn to another. He must have gripped us pretty closely, for it was not until a telephone call disturbed one of the party, we discovered that breakfast had carried on until afternoon.

On that occasion, Mark Twain was, I remember, a most picturesque figure in white flannels.

These happy events took place in what was almost another world, but such was the personality of our endearing visitor, every moment spent in his company left an unforgettable impression, as vivid today as it was when he said, Goodbye, fifty-four years ago.

He was indeed a great and genial soul, who, in passing, bequeathed to the world, golden memories which will never fade.

Mark Twain's Joan of Arc

Neil Bell

When I was fourteen or so I was a greedier and hungrier reader than I have ever been since. I had soon bolted down (for that was how I read) the available books in the public library of the moderate-sized town where I lived; and I went looking farther afield and in my hunting stumbled on some rich rewards.

One day I came upon a fat brown book (I can see it now) with red lettering on the cover: *Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain. I picked it up with no great interest; with none of that excitement with which I snatched at a new Rider Haggard or Conan Doyle or Rudyard Kipling. All I had then read by Mark Twain was *The Innocents Abroad* and had been but mildly interested. As for Joan of Arc, I had learned something about her at school; but it had been told me by a tired precise voice in the dispirited atmosphere of a typical English classroom of that time and had failed to capture me.

No; I did not want to read any more about Joan of Arc; nor any other books by Mark Twain. I reached up to put the book back on the shelf; and then, for no reason I can recollect or even imagine, I drew back my arm and opened the book. It was a well-thumbed volume and fell open easily at the first page. I read the first two paragraphs of the story and the enchanter held me fast.

What an opening of a tale to bind a boy with the spell of old romance:

"This is the year 1492. I am eighty-two years of age. The things I am going to tell you about are the things which I saw myself as a child and as a youth.

"In all the tales and songs and histories of Joan of Arc which you and the rest of the world read and sing and study in the books wrought in the late invented art of printing, mention is made of me, the Sieur Louis de Conte. I was her page and secretary. I was with her from the beginning until the end."

"I was reared in the small village with her. I played with her every day when we were children together. . . ."

I took the book to the librarian and said, "Can I have this please?" He said nothing;

did not even glance at the book or at me; stamped it with the date and handed it back to me as casually and indifferently as if it had been a loaf of bread.

It was in its way a loaf of bread: old Omar's loaf of bread with, too, the cup of wine and thou beside me singing in the wilderness; and the song was more magical than ever the sirens sang.

I walked home slowly, reading as I went, as I often did with a new book that had taken me in thrall. And when I sat down to tea I was still reading it.

There were bloaters for tea that day, so it was a Friday; for as children we marked our days by what we had for tea. My father worked with his muscles and brought a ferocious appetite to the table at the end of the day, so that tea was a big meal: on Monday cold beef; on Tuesday ham; on Wednesday bubble-and-squeak; and so on. The fare for the day never varied. There were bloaters on that memorable day and so I know it must have been a Friday.

There was no school the next day and I had two whole days to read this new treasure. But I could not wait. I could not escape from the spell of the enchanter. I wasn't interested in the tea-table. Even the bloaters were as nothing. But I sat down at the table, still reading.

"Put your book away," my mother said. "You'll make it greasy." I went on reading. "Put your book away," she repeated patiently. I went on reading. "Put that book down boy!" my father thundered; "or go to bed."

I put it down. I ate my tea. I suppose the bloater was delicious but I don't remember. I was not there. I was walking in another land. I was the boy in W. J. Turner's poem:

*When I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land;
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi.
Took me by the hand.*

But it was Mark Twain, wearing the cloak of the Sieur Louis de Conte, who had me by the hand.

I read on all the evening and took the book to bed with me. We went to bed with candles.

I was sleeping alone that night, so my brother must have been away. But I have forgotten all that. When my father and mother came up to bed my father banged at the door and commanded, "Put that light out boy."

I put it out. I rarely disobeyed my father; and never when I had so little covering as a nightshirt. But when I thought all was safe again I relit the candle and went on reading.

I do not know what time it was when I came to the end; but my eyes must have closed from utter tiredness, for in the morning the book lay face down on the floor and the candle had burnt down and guttered out and the blue and white enamelled candlestick was a sorry mess which would need some explaining away. Luckily it would only be my mother I should have to convince and she was easy.

How many books in one's reading life are there whose impact on the imagination is remembered as vividly as I remember that story of Mark Twain's? In my own reading life I can at this moment think of no others except *The Martyrdom of Man* by Winwood Reade and *The City of Dreadful Night* by James Thomson.

Mark Twain's *Joan of Arc* sent me for years to other books about the maid: to *Vie de Jeanne d'Arc* by Anatole France; to Andrew Lang's *The Maid of France*; to *Jeanne d'Arc* by Georges Hanotaux; to Shaw's play *Saint Joan*; to Albert Bigelow Paine's fat two volume *Joan of Arc*; to *Joan of Arc* by Hilaire Belloc; and, quite recently, to *The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc* by W. P. Barrett: a verbatim translation of the *proces-verbal*.

Anatole France's book I found repulsive. His approach was purely clinical. Joan was a mental case; a schizophrenic; a manic-depressive; a village idiot subject to religious ecstasies and hallucinations. He would have clapped her into Bedlam or delivered her over to the probing perils of the psychiatrist's couch.

Lang's Joan was a child saint reared up with the pigs and chickens; lost and bewildered in the world of court chicanery; and at the last so broken that she might have echoed the despairing cry of Jesus: *My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?*

In Shaw's *St. Joan* I found it impossible to believe. Here was no shrewd homely peasant

girl but one of Shaw's projections of himself. It is Shaw not Joan who bandies words with Robert de Baudricourt; Shaw not Joan who says to the Archbishop of Rheims "Oh, my lord, will you send all these silly folks away so that I may speak to the Dauphin alone": the "silly folks" being the whole court. Is it likely a peasant girl, come for the first time into the midst of all that splendour, would have said that to an Archbishop?

At the end of Scene V Shaw puts into Joan's mouth a long speech of great and moving beauty. It begins, you will remember, "Where would you all have been now if I had heeded that sort of truth?" It runs to two-hundred-and-fifty words and is perhaps the finest piece of writing in the whole play. But it is not Joan speaking. Even her "voices" could only speak to her in her own very limited and bare vocabulary.

Belloc draws the portrait of a pious little Roman Catholic girl; and Barrett fails to illumine the dusty fog of the trial's verbiage with one single human gleam of warmth and light.

Only in Mark Twain's story is Joan the peasant girl she must have been: shrewd, superstitious, dutiful, hard-working, down to earth, and full of common sense; one who lived as a child the normal life of the village, playing games, believing in fairies, in awe of the *Cure*, helping with the household chores, and respecting her parents. And when she confronts Robert de Baudricourt, or the Dauphin, or discusses with the Bastard of New Orleans, her speech is that of a shrewd young peasant woman. But it is no more than that and Mark Twain does not make it more.

It is only when under the stress of great emotion and stirred by her love of God and her devotion to France that sudden glowing inspiration endows her with words beyond her normal usage; and it is in his awareness of this, and of its provenance and its infrequency, that Mark Twain excels all other writers who have tried to draw a true likeness of the maid.

Yet even in these inspired moments he does not graft upon her tongue words she could not have known. All he does is to choose simple words for her; but so chosen and arranged that they read like words from

a poem. There was always a poet hiding in Mark Twain.

There is a touching simplicity in her, "It is true I have wanted to escape and I do want to escape. It is the right of every prisoner!"

And again, "I came from God. I have nothing more to do here. Return me to God."

Then comes a moment of inspiration, when Beaupere set his trap with the question, "Are you in a state of Grace?" It was, Mark Twain says quietly, a fatal snare, a terrible question; for the Church had said one cannot know if one is in a state of Grace. Inspired, Joan answered:

"If I am not in a state of Grace, I pray God place me in it; if I am in it, I pray God keep me so."

When later she was asked, "What impulse was it, do you think, that moved the people to kiss your hands, your feet, your vestments?" she avoided the concealed trap, replying with an inspired simplicity of language: "They were glad to see me, and so they did those things; and I could not have prevented them if I had had the heart. They came with love to me because I had not done them any hurt."

Presently a question was put to her that brought a reply it is difficult to translate from the simple moving French of the original. The question was, "Why was it that *your* standard had place at the crowning of the King in the Cathedral of Rheims, rather than those of the other captains?" She answered, "Il avait ete a la peine; c'etait raison qu'il fut a l'honneur." There have been many translations of this inspired answer. I know of none better than Mark Twain's, "It had borne the burden, it had earned the honor."

They were wearing her down but they had not yet defeated her. She became ill after eating some fish sent to her by Bishop Cauchon and it was two weeks before the trial was resumed. During the first day of the resumption the Inquisitor said to her, "If you do not submit to the Church you will be pronounced a heretic by there judges here present and burned at the stake."

Incident in Huckleberry Finn

Phillip H. Highfill, Jr.
The George Washington University

How widespread in folklore is the incident in which Huck Finn betrays his sex to the farmer's wife by clapping his knees together to catch the lump of lead (Chapter 11, "They Are After Us!")?

Apparently the idea as a test of sex was current in England as well as in America, and Twain could have found it in the grab-bag of scholarly argument, ana, and country custom called *Literary Anecdotes . . . Of Professor Porson and Others; from the Manuscript Papers of the Late E. H. Barker* . . . London, 1852 (Anecdote No. CCCXXXIV The Two Thieves, p. 282).

"Two thieves, disguised as country-girls, obtained admittance at a farm-house, which they intended to rob. In the course of the evening the farmer began to entertain suspicion of their sex. To settle the point, he tossed into their laps the shells of some nuts he had been cracking. The pretended females immediately crossed their knees to prevent the shells from falling through, forgetting that women never do so, because their petticoats accomplish that purpose for them. The farmer secretly left the house and returned with assistance to capture his deceitful guests."

She did not quail, drawing strength and inspiration from her peril. She said, "I will not say otherwise than I have already said; and if I saw fire before me, I would say it again." Only Mark Twain noted that Manchon, one of the official scribes at the trial, wrote in the margin of the record "*Superba responsio.*"

Throughout the whole story of Joan's life it is her simplicity, her peasant's good sense, her naturalness, her warm humanity, her close kinship with the common people, that Mark Twain insists upon over and over again and that one finds so stressed in no other book about her.

In the Mark Twain canon his *Joan of Arc* should stand much higher than it does and it will eventually do so.

The Embarrassment of a Famous Name

Sir Geoffrey Shakespeare

Everyone must of course agree with Iago that a "good name in man or woman is the immediate jewel of the soul."

Although a good name may be a jewel, a famous one may be a rough diamond, and even an embarrassment. I have suffered from a famous name all my born days, and often I could have cried with Richard II

"Oh that I were less than my name."

In the first place my name inspires an instinctive curiosity. The dreadful secret must come out. Yes, I am the eleventh generation from William the Poet. We come from Shakespeare's father, for William had only one son, who died unmarried, and two daughters, who changed their name on marriage. No direct descendants of William bearing the name of Shakespeare, therefore, survive. Yes, the College of Heralds has granted me the Crest, adapted to my use.

Yes, every first son has been called William for three hundred years, but I am a second son.

No, I don't write plays and so it goes on ad infinitum.

Not only are strangers unbelievably curious but they expect much more from me than from a man with a common name. When, as a Member of Parliament, I had to make a speech, my listeners would expect the most brilliant thoughts wrapped up in impeccable blank verse. In their disappointment they would mutter "That's a poor speech for a Shakespeare!" If my name had been Smith they might have said "that's a pretty good speech for a Smith."

Sometimes people abroad seemed taken aback on hearing my name. They were not quite sure whether William was alive or dead. A Greek janitor in Athens when I gave my name, drew me confidentially aside to hear the latest news of "my Father," and was astonished to learn that he had been dead for over three hundred years.

The "New World" is just as curious. I was trying a long distance call from New York and gave the girl operator my name. "Shakespeare," she said, "garn, you're fooling." "No," I apologized, "I am sorry but it is my name." "O. K. William," she said, "then mine is Mrs. Abraham Lincoln."

I had been touring North America with

no chance of sending dirty linen to the wash until I dropped down at Chicago to stay with a sister for a week. So I sent my laundry to the wash. Four days later a girl from the laundry telephoned,

"That you, Mr. Shakespeare? I am not sending those collars back. I have never seen a collar marked "Shakespeare" before and they are going into my collection—but I will send you four others."

She did, and I finished my tour with the oddest neckware I have ever worn. Had my name been Smith, should I have thus got it in the neck?

Yes, things often happen to one bearing the name of Shakespeare. I remember addressing an audience of 1500 Zulu girls at Loveday, the famous Presbyterian college in South Africa. The subject of my address was a dull one—The British House of Commons—dull at least for those girls, who had never been outside the Cape Colony and barely understood what the word Parliament meant. Nevertheless I received an outstanding ovation. They flashed their white teeth in amorous delight, rolled their white eyes in ecstasy and gave me a warmth of welcome that my oratory seldom evokes. Afterwards as I walked away they milled round me clutching my hand, stroking my coat, caressing my hair and touching any part of my body. I knew, of course, the expression "being killed by kindness" but I was new to the sensation of being "lynched by adoration." It must sometimes happen to film stars but it had never happened to me before. Anxiously I said to the President, who walked beside me, "What's happening? What is the matter? What are they doing to me? What have I done?"

"Don't be frightened," he said, "it is only their excitement. They have been acting *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for weeks and they want to show you their appreciation because they think you are the Shakespeare who wrote it!"

One day perhaps some probing professor will prove conclusively that Bacon or Oxford, Mark Twain or Bernard Shaw, wrote "Shakespeare," and I shall continue my unremembered way, un-honoured and unsung. In the

(Continued on page 9)

Melville and Mark Twain in Rebellion

By David D. Anderson
Michigan State University

Although more than half a century intervened between the publications of Herman Melville's *The Confidence Man* and Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger*, the two works had their origins in the same period in American history, the latter half of the nineteenth century. Commonly, this period was held to be the time during which the American dream of inevitable progress toward environmental perfection reached its highest point in reality. Neither Melville nor Mark Twain subscribed to this common view, however. For each it was the period during which man was most completely duped by his environment to the point where it was impossible for him to distinguish truth from falsehood, appearance from reality. Both Melville and Twain gave expression to this minority opinion, each in his own way, according to his own views of the nature of this colossal deception which man allows to be played on himself.

In *The Confidence Man*, published in 1857, Melville used as his narrative framework the journey of a Mississippi River steamboat heading downstream, stopping at the innumerable river ports, discharging and taking aboard passengers and freight. This, in itself, is a symbol of apparent progress. Melville makes it likewise a symbol of the fraudulence of human experience by making it the happy hunting ground of the confidence man who preys upon the inability of the passengers to distinguish reality from appearance.

In the hustle and bustle of the departing steamboat in the opening scene, Melville illustrates the confidence man's knowledge of the essential naivete of the common man. The reader's attention is focused on two signs: the first is a slate holding slogans eulogizing charity; the second is a "No Trust" sign erected by the ship's barber. The barber's sign is accepted at face value by the passengers; the slogans are distrusted in such an environment, leading to suspicion of a crippled beggar and hence to his subsequent profit. In this instance, the confidence man, representing society in the larger sense, shows his knowledge of human psychology. The "No Trust" sign is right in such an environ-

ment; the charitable slogans are wrong. Man, the absolutist, can accept no other interpretation; the confidence man, a relativist, has thus used appearance for his own profit. The confidence man does not use falsehood here; he merely distorts reality in accordance with his knowledge to gain his own ends.

The confidence man appears and reappears throughout the book in various guises, using the same procedure of distorting reality for his own purposes. Especially significant in his reappearances are two situations which are further indications of man's inability to perceive reality undistorted by appearance. In the first of these incidents, the confidence man reappears as a man who has a scheme to apply business techniques to missionary and charitable work. A plan so broad, so complex, and so well founded in sound business practices would inevitably be successful, and the confidence man profits by its acceptance by a fellow passenger. In this situation, a basic ambiguity can be seen: a plan essentially good, insured of success by eminently practical methods, is in itself ambiguous. Means can not be justified by ends; the insinuation that this is possible is trickery, as the confidence man knows, and he profits by his knowledge.

The second of these significant incidents illustrates a further ambiguity stemming from the inability to distinguish between appearance and reality. In this incident, a passenger relates a story of an Indian fighter, a dedicated, sincere man who devotes his life altruistically to the slaughter of Indians in the name of Right, of civilization versus savagery. This selfless, dedicated man, possessing all the traditional Christian virtues, is at times misled by events, and he begins to love the Indians, thus becoming soft and losing his Christian virtues. This situation points out the ambiguity that when man is dedicated, even to killing, he is virtuous; whereas when he loves, he loses virtue. The question remains: where does true virtue lie?

In *The Confidence Man*, then, Melville has attempted to delineate the nature of the fraud practiced by society upon man; he sees this dupery on three levels: (1) reality belied by appearance; (2) the ambiguity of assuming

that things inherently different can be united for good; (3) most importantly, the inherently ambiguous nature of virtue, the ambiguity that lies at the heart of despair. Although as a work of literary art, *The Confidence Man* has shortcomings, it remains a serious, often bitter, indictment of society.

Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger*, published in 1916 after Twain's death, is his expression of his later, embittered belief that human experience was essentially fraudulent in nature. Turning to a medieval Swiss village for his setting in order to utilize supernatural as well as natural beliefs, Twain demonstrates that absolutes do not exist except in the human mind. Using as a basis the appearance of Satan, a supernatural being, in the village, Twain points out that only Satan knows that everything in human life, seen from the long view, is relative, that morality, standards of behavior, and God himself do not exist except in the frauds which man's mind practices upon him. In the incident in which Peter is falsely accused of theft, this point is made especially obvious. A trial is held to determine the truth or falsity of the accusation and to do justice. Everyone in the village believes that justice will be the logical result. Satan, however, knowing that this assumption is false, that this is not the true sequence of cause and effect, causes Peter to be acquitted and also causes him to go insane, thus losing contact with the apparent order of the world and finding real sanity in the chaos of truth.

Satan places great emphasis upon man's moral sense, attributing to it the evil, cruel acts performed in the name of humanity. Injustice is done more often than justice as a result of the moral sense; in addition, wrong stems from an awareness of wrong. Without the moral sense, an act becomes merely an act, neither right nor wrong in itself. Believing that acts are absolutely good or evil is true insanity; man's belief that his choices are rational is nonsense.

Furthermore, Satan points out man's basic misunderstanding of his place in the universe. In reality, God has no feeling, either favorable or unfavorable, toward a being so far below him; hence, an order based on a belief that

man is worthy of God's attention is false, just as the moral sense is false. Morality is not wrong; it merely does not matter. God does not love man; he is indifferent.

Free will is also rejected by Satan. Man's life is a rigidly determined sequence of cause and effect, stemming from his initial act and inexorably running its course. Man, unaware of this situation, deludes himself by thinking that he has a choice. Even God has no influence in this sequence; man himself starts the cycle with his first act.

Basically, in *The Mysterious Stranger* Mark Twain sees human experience as a gigantic fraud, practiced upon man by his own inability to perceive the real nature of truth because of the hold upon him of false assumptions stemming from a false interpretation of reality. Twain sees no order, no justice, no morality in human life, but he sees the truth of human life to be a rigid determinism, occasionally noticed by a disinterested God.

In both *The Confidence Man* and *The Mysterious Stranger*, the basic premise is that appearance and reality are widely separated; that appearance is false, and that the deductions and assumptions made by man from his observations of appearance are likewise false, and that man can determine truth only by perceiving reality beneath appearance. Thus, human experience, intrinsically tied to appearance as it is, is false; by failing to perceive this, man allows himself to be deluded and tricked by his own experience.

(Continued from page 7)

FAMOUS NAME

meantime my famous name will continue to be an embarrassment.

My family also sometimes shares my embarrassment. My son and heir (William, of course) was involved in a bad motor accident and ended up in a ditch. A passer-by rescued him and, when the ambulance arrived, said to the attendant, I have asked him his name but he keeps telling me he is William Shakespeare. Poor boy! He is badly concussed and QUITE NUTS!

Four Emmeline Grangerfords

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Perhaps there is only one true literary Cherry Sister in American letters and she is Julia A. Moore, the "Sweet Singer of Michigan." Although her verse is bad enough to win her a permanent niche in some hall of "reverse fame," it is as the leading candidate for the model of Emmeline Grangerford in *Huckleberry Finn*, that she is apt to be immortalized.

Any close comparison of Julia's and Emmeline's verse will show that Julia's glove fits snugly on Twain's satirical hand, but as the American literature scholar, Walter Blair once pointed out, the case for Julia *qua* Emmeline is somewhat confused for obituary and disaster poets flourished in Twain's time. 1 It might be safer to say then that Emmeline is a composite picture: a mixture of say, two parts Julia, one part Bloodgood H. Cutter, the "Poet Lariat" of *Innocents Abroad*, and several small parts of the staff versifiers on the old Philadelphia *Public Ledger*; namely one G. Washington Childs, who was noted for his facility in manufacturing sentimental doggerel to be placed over the paper's daily obituary columns. 2 Possibly, too, in this business of discovering the true-life model of Emmeline, one might even work in Seba Smith, the American political satirist, and the Scotch poet and "tragedian" William McGonagall as dark horse candidates. However, evidence to be presented here will attempt to bear out the assertion that Mrs. Moore remains as the leading stand-in for Emmeline.

Twain's humorous disdain for the obituary poetry fad, that flourished in the 1870's and beyond, is well known as per his brief but charming speech on this subject in Philadelphia in 1895. However, *Huck Finn*, published some ten years earlier, must certainly contain the funniest lampoon on such poets in existence. Actually, Twain's devastating portrait of Julia in *Huck Finn* is literary criticism, directed not so much at the sweet Singer and her kind, but at American literary taste of the period. Very likely Twain was annoyed that much of the reading public regarded this poetic genre as serious art; it was "good poetry" that was all, and even some of the critics who reviewed Moore's poems after the 1878 publication of her *Sen-*

timental Songbook seemed taken in. 3

The case, then, for Moore as Emmeline boils down to the following facts and illustrations:

1. Julia and Emmeline were of the female gender; most "mortuary songsters" of the period that Twain could have conceivably used for models were men, meaning mainly Cutter and Childs, and possibly Smith or McGonagall. 4

2. Julia, according to her main biographer, A. H. Greenly, was an avid reader of the obituary columns in newspapers in and around her home community of Algoma, Michigan, and composed her tender elegies on the instant of spotting the death notices. Thus Twain writes of Emmeline:

Every time . . . a child died, she would be on hand with her "tribute" before he was cold. The neighbors said it was the doctor first, then Emmeline, then the undertaker . . .

3. Twain, in *Following The Equator* (1897), admitted that he read the Sweet Singer for over twenty years running:

I have been reading the poems of Mrs. Julia A. Moore, again, and I find in them the same grace and melody that attracted me when they were first published, twenty years ago, and have held me in happy bonds ever since. (page 339)

The above paragraph is rather a gracious compliment to Mrs. Moore, but Twain goes on:

She has the touch that makes an intentionally humorous episode pathetic, and an intentionally pathetic one, funny.

And of course, this "touch" is just what is so funny about Emmeline's "Ode to Stephen Dowling Bots, Dec'd."

4. For our next to the last point: no one could compare Emmeline's "Ode" with Julia's "Little Andrew," or if you will, "Hiram Hessel" and not be taken with Twain's ability to capture the soul and substance of his model's art.

Of the three poems it can be said that Twain's is by far the funniest, but then he meant to be funny and no one could match him for deliberate humor; on the other hand, no one has been quite able to match Julia for unconscious humor either, so the score is

about even.

5. For the fifth and final point: To hoist Twain by his own petard, so to speak, it can be noted that in *Following The Equator* he complains that the "Naturalist" aboard ship had copied the spirit, if not the letter, of Julia's art in the poem, "Invocation." Twain writes: Perhaps no poet is a conscious plagiarist; but there seems to be warrant for suspecting that there is no poet who is not at one time or another an unconscious one. The above verses ('Come forth from thy oozy couch. O Ornithorhynchus dear!) are indeed beautiful, and, in a way, touching; but there is a haunting something about them which unavoidably suggests the Sweet Singer of Michigan. It can hardly be doubted that the author has read the works of that poet and been impressed . . . (pp. 105-106)

Now according to Twain's biographer, Albert Bigelow Paine, there was no "Naturalist" aboard the Australia-bound ship and that Twain himself composed the Ornithorhynchus poem as a humorous diversion—which would seem to clinch the argument that at least Twain was an apt student of Julia's style.

The candidate next in line for the dubious honor of being the inspiration for Emmeline Grangerford is Bloodgood H. Cutter, "The Long Island Farmer Poet" who plagued Twain with his poetic presence aboard the *Quaker City*. Cutter wrote on any and all subjects with an incredible lack of talent, but the poem that seems to come the nearest in tone and style to "Stephen Botts, Dec'd" is this one:

ON THE DEATH OF MISS HEGERMAN
So lively at our pic-nic seemed
And with her friends did it enjoy
She looked the picture of good health,
And she did help each girl and boy.
But that happy, merry time,
With her did quickly pass away,
Disease on her did sudden come,
Then death did seize her for his prey. 5

Of course the gap is a bit too wide between "Stephen Botts" and "Miss Hegerman," but the same tone is present in both poems. However, upon reading Twain's notebook we can see his irritation at the poets of Cutter's stripe was much more pronounced, thus the deduction that if he *had* chosen Cutter as the model for Emmeline the sparks would have flown in earnest. In other words, the Twain who

could write in *Following The Equator*, "I have been reading the poems of Julia A. Moore . . . and I find in them the same grace and melody that attracted me . . . twenty years ago" . . . is a Twain who would be somewhat gentle with Julia.

As for Cutter, Twain bluntly stated in his notebook: These (Bloodgood's printed poems with his portrait at the top) he will give to any man who comes along whether he has anything against him or not. He has already written interminable poems on 'The Good Ship Quaker City,' 'Recollections of the Pleasant Time on Deck,' which pleasant time consisting in his reciting some 75 stanzas of his poetry to a large party of (trapped) passengers.

Although this writer does not know how wide Twain's reading may have ranged in respect to the Obituary Poets, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that he could have chanced upon the writings of the Scotch bard and self-styled "tragedian," William McGonagall (1830-189-?), who in the late 1870's and as far away as Dundee had caught the mortality fever in dead earnest. Like Emmeline and Julia, only a good death or a disaster, hot off the griddle, could cause McGonagall's pen to flow:

WRECK OF THE STEAMER LONDON

'Twas in the year of 1866, and on a very
beautiful day,
That 82 passengers with spirits light and gay
Left Gravesend harbor and sailed gaily away,
On board the Steamship London,
Bound for the City of Melbourne
Which unfortunately was her last run
Because she was wrecked on the stormy main
Which caused many a heart to throb with
pain
Because they will not look upon their loved
ones again. 6

After this gem from McGonagall's *Poetic Gems*, let us return to Julia's marvelous "Ash-tabula Disaster":

Have you heard of the dreadful fate
Of Mr. P. P. Bliss and wife?
Of their death I will relate
And also others lost their life;
Ash-tabula Bridge disaster,
Where so many people died
Without a thought that destruction
Would plunge them 'neath the wheel of tide.
Of the two, Julia remains the champ in

her particular field, but we can plainly see that McGonagall runs a very close second, and he and Julia were kindred spirits, brother and sister under their poetic skins.

The final candidate for the prototype of Emmeline to be considered here is Seba Smith (1792-1868), the American political satirist, author of a good many poems, but mainly known for his "Major Jack Downing" letters. Early in his writing career Seba was somewhat attracted to what may possibly be called obituary poetry. See, for example, his verse, "Three Little Graves" quoted partially in Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*:

'Twas autumn, and the leaves were dry
And rustled on the ground;
And chilly winds went whistling by
With a low and pensive sound.

Seba, too, was attracted to disaster poetry and according to Mary A. Wyman in her book, *Two American Pioneers*, Seba published in the *Eastern Argus* a poem titled, "The Burning Ship at Sea" which was inspired by the destruction of the ship, *Abema* near England in 1821:

Now the flames are spreading fast—
With resistless rage they fly, . . .
Now the deck is all ablaze;
Now the rails. . .

There's no place to rest their feet. . .

However, Seba cannot be considered an obituary poet in the sense of Moore or Cutter and indeed, the chief reason for including him here is the rather strange remark Paine makes in his comments to Twain's *Notebook*. Paine writes: The next existing notebook begins with Seba Smith's stately "Burial of Moses," a poem whose lofty wording and majestic imagery had no small influence on Mark Twain's work. He frequently recited two stanzas from it and now in view of the Holy Land trip set them down in full. 7

Paine then proceeds to quote a few stanzas from the poem, but we need go no further than the first line, "By Nebo's lonely mountain," etc., to suddenly realize that Paine had Seba Smith confused with the Irish poetess, Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895), who was noted for her religious verse and hymns. Very likely Smith did impress Twain, but it must have been his prose humor, and very likely Alexander's poems did win Twain's heart, but she was too skillful a poet to have ever been the model for Em-

meline Grangerford.

Getting back to the question: who was Emmeline? Yes, there is some doubt that Julia and Emmeline are one and the same; Cutter, Childs, and perhaps even the fictional "Widow Bedott," McGonagall and Smith are candidates, but the evidence seems overwhelming in favor of Julia. Although the Sweet Singer's own poems may fade into oblivion, she will live on in *Huck Finn* for decades to come.

1 Julia A. Moore, *The Sweet Singer of Michigan*, Walter Blair, (ed.), (Chicago: Pascal Covici, 1928), p. xx. See, however, Blair's recently published *Mark Twain and Huck Finn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 210. Blair now feels that Julia most influenced the Emmeline portrait, but acknowledges other candidates.

2 Although Childs is representative of the many staff versifiers who wrote for the *Ledger*, he was a paid, professional "mortuary songster" and thus does not merit consideration here for he cannot be fairly listed as a "model" for the purely amateur Emmeline.

3 See, for example, Joseph Carter, "Algoma's Gift to Poesy," *Saturday Review* Vol. 29 (March 23, 1946), p. 32.

4 Blair, *Mark Twain and Huck Finn*, p. 406. In a footnote, Blair mentions a fictional character of the humorist, Mrs. Francis M. Witcher, the "widow Bedott," who wrote sentimental verse, as a possible model, but this seems the one other exception.

5 Bloodgood H. Cutter, *The Long Island Farmer's Poems* (New York: N. Tibbals & Sons, 1886), pp. 341-342. Connoisseurs of mortuary poetry might prefer Cutter's quatrain on the death of his wife: "When the doctor said her end was near it did effect me so severe; it seemed to paralyze my brains and the circulation of my veins."

6 William McGonagall, *Poetic Gems* (Dundee: David Winter, 1951), p. 62. First published in 1890; however, the poems were widely distributed in leaflet forms much earlier.

7 Paine, *Mark Twain's Notebook*, 1935

NEIGHBORING FARM

Grace Hollowell

The red brick
Is neighbor too
Rippling with
The coldness
Of fresh-water
Springs, essence
Of soul-sweetness
Rough clean
Hands I love to hold
In my own two small,
Utterly dependant
Ones, releasing hers only to watch
Her shape the lettuce
Cold and gleaming . . .
Form and hold
The mold.

Uncle Tom and 'Nigger Jim'

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS AND SIMILARITIES

Abigail Ann Hamblen

Every American, literate or semi-literate, knows both *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Huckleberry Finn*. If he has not read them, he has heard of them: he has seen paper-backed editions on drug-store racks, or garbled "comic" versions. If he lives above the Mason-Dixon line, his attitude toward Negro slavery and perhaps toward the Civil War itself may be largely colored (though probably unconsciously) by the first. If his home is any distance at all from the center of the continent, he can hardly think of the Mississippi without at once remembering Huckleberry Finn's long exciting voyage.

Thus some of almost every American's knowledge of his own country may be traced to these novels, separated as they are by time, dissimilar as they are in mood and temper and art. 1 The expression "little Eva" may have become a joke, but the name "Legree" has attained almost the status of a common noun. And a raft, floating lazily down the Mississippi, has its own meaning to young dreamers. Pictures of Southern ante-bellum life and rowdy river-adventure in the days of steamboats remain fixed. "While the historian," observes one, "labor to authenticate each tile for the mosaic he laboriously assembles, the novelist, with broad finish and vivid colors, may capture with a few bold strokes an impression of the age recalled." Another declares *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to belong "not only to literature but to folk-lore; 3 and *Huckleberry Finn*, he says, is "with *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick*, the third American novel that can be called simply, great. 4

"Folk-lore" or "great"—epithets do not matter. What matters to all Americans is that both are exciting stories, well told. And they are exciting because each is the masterpiece of its author. Mrs. Stowe was fired with an almost incredible zeal as she wrote of the plight of Negro slaves during the decades before the war: "... the story can less be said to have been composed by her than imposed upon her. . . The book insisted upon getting itself into being, and would take no denial." 5 Never again—though she wrote much for an eager public—never again did she attain the truly superb style that makes

her tale so wonderfully readable even today. As for Mark Twain, he undoubtedly put himself into *Huckleberry Finn*; here is his zest for life, his love of the great river, his feeling for nature, his sheer delight in freedom.

Because the institution of slavery plays a prominent part in each novel, it is of interest to study them side by side; for in each there is a memorable Negro. In the lives of Uncle Tom and "Nigger" Jim may be embodied both Mrs. Stowe's and Mark Twain's attitudes toward society. As will be noted, these attitudes do not differ fundamentally from each other. What are radically (and amusingly) different are the methods of presentation.

Mrs. Stowe is militant, religious, practically humorless (at least where her main theme is concerned.) See her statement of purpose in the Preface: "The object of these sketches is to awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race, as they exist among us; to show their wrongs and sorrows, under a system so necessarily cruel and unjust as to defeat and do away the good effects of all that can be attempted for them, by their best friends, under it." 6

Beside this place Mark Twain's laconic offhand "Notice" on the frontispiece of *Huckleberry Finn*: "Persons attempting to find a motive in the narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot." 7

Read first the one novel, then the other, and the contrast is sharp: Mrs. Stowe is both scolding and preaching (as well as being amazingly entertaining.) Mark Twain is laughing scornfully at the world, and enjoying himself. And in each a slave stands out, a key figure, mutely important. It is of great interest to place Uncle Tom and Jim side by side; great differences are seen at once, as well as astonishing similarities.

Before the reader actually meets Uncle Tom, his owner, the Kentuckian Mr. Shelby, describes him to the slave-trader, Haley, as a "good, steady, sensible, pious fellow. He got religion at a camp-meeting, four years ago; and I believe he really *did* get it." 8 And

when finally he himself is introduced, he is in his little cabin, surrounded by his family: ". . . a large, broad-chested, powerfully made man, of a full glossy black and a face whose truly African features were characterized by an expression of grave and steady good sense, united with much kindness and benevolence. There was something about his whole air—self-respecting and dignified, yet united with confiding and humble simplicity."⁹ Again, "He was an expert and efficient workman in whatever he undertook, and was, both from habit and principle, prompt and faithful."¹⁰

He is shown, loving and beloved, in the households of two kind masters, happy as he is able to be away from his Chloe and the little ones. He is shown next in the hands of the brutal Legree, amidst surroundings of the most degrading sort, with pain and fear and sheer viciousness everywhere. Yet he is found morally courageous, upheld by a strong, simple religious faith, refusing, under threat of the most frightful tortures, to lapse into the bestiality his master demands of him: "Mas'r Legree, as ye bought me, I'll be a true and faithful servant to ye. I'll give ye all the work of my hands, all my time, all my strength; but my soul I won't give up to mortal man. I will hold on to the Lord, and put his commands before all,—die or live; you may be sure on't. Mas'r Legree, I an't a grain afeard to die. I'd as soon die as not. Ye may whip me, starve me, burn me, it'll only send me sooner where I want to go."¹¹ And at last he dies what amounts to a martyr's death, beaten because he refuses to tell how two women slaves escaped: "He most gone, Mas'r. said Sambo, touched, in spite of himself, by the patience of his victim."

"Pay away, till he gives up! Give it to him!—give it to him!" shouted Legree. "I'll take every drop of blood he has, unless he confesses!"

"Tom opened his eyes, and looked upon his master. 'Ye poor miserable critter!' he said, 'there an't no more ye can do! I forgive ye, with all my soul!'"¹²

Here is, of course, the stock figure beloved by abolitionists—the suffering slave with nobility of character. Then, too, there is always the possibility that Mrs. Stowe's feeling for the Negroes is tinged with Rousseauism, which is more or less subtly present everywhere in early nineteenth-century thinking.

Mrs. Stowe, sternly orthodox, might have been the first to deny this element in her own viewpoint, but there are unmistakable signs of it, nevertheless. She is not far from the theory of the noble, unspoiled child of nature when she prophesies that some day in Africa, "the Negro race, no longer despised and trodden down, will, perhaps, show forth some of the latest and most magnificent revelations of human life. Certainly they will in their gentleness, their lowly docility of heart, their aptitude to repose on a superior mind and rest on a higher power, their childlike simplicity of affection, and facility of forgiveness. In all these they will exhibit the highest form of the peculiarly Christian life. . . ." ¹³

But Uncle Tom is more than a symbol of a race potentially glamorous; he is more than a rallying point in the struggle against slavery. He is a human being. Granted he is capable of solemnly preaching to his careless young master, St. Clare, pleading with him to fore swear alcohol (and that episode, with its mixture of forwardness, gentle reproachfulness, priggishness and tearful emotion can never be imitated). Granted he is noted for his prayers and for his willingness to break into hymns and homilies on the slightest excuse. He also delights in being with children, and has any number of ways of amusing them. They love the tiny carvings he can make, the stories he can tell, his songs. And they long to help him. For example, consider the endearing scene with young Marse George, who is teaching him to write: "'Not that way, Uncle Tom—not that way,' said he, briskly, as Uncle Tom laboriously brought up the tail of his g the wrong side out. 'That makes a q, you see!'"

"'La sakes, now, does it?' said Uncle Tom, looking with a respectful admiring air, as his young teacher flourishingly scrawled q's and g's innumerable for his edification; and then, taking the pencil in his big, heavy fingers, he patiently recommenced."¹⁴

There is something endearing, too, about Tom's genuine kindness to everyone, including his fellow-slaves. It is difficult to remain unmoved at the account of his helping the wretched black woman on Legree's estate—cooking their pitiful suppers for them, comforting them with his gospel oof Jesus.

Hard-working, faithful, religious, amiable, essentially dignified, Uncle Tom has, it seems,

all the virtues and none of the vices to which human flesh is heir. That being so, it is to his creator's credit that he remains a vividly believable person. 15

In contrast, Huck Finn's friend seems an amazingly simple figure. If Uncle Tom is a stock symbol of an oppressed race, "Nigger" Jim is the popular notion of the colored "funny man," the "fall guy" of stage and fiction. Aiding this impression is his quite fathomless ignorance enlivened by the most grotesque superstition, coupled with an innocent disregard for the truth, and touched by a bit of harmless guile. One incident illustrates all these traits.

Early in the story, Huck, who has been living with the Widow Douglas and Miss Watson (Jim's owner) sees Pap's footprints in the snow, indicating that that formidable parent is again in the vicinity of the village. What is he going to do? This is literally a vital question, and so he goes to Jim who has a hair-ball as big as your fist" taken from the fourth stomach of an ox. With this, Jim can do "magic." However, the hair-ball refuses to answer, though Jim drops it on the floor again and again, and even puts his ear to it. Finally he tells Huck that at times the hair-ball does not react without money. At this Huck proffers a counterfeit quarter (with some of the brass showing). "I said it was pretty bad mony, but maybe the hair-ball would take it, because maybe it wouldn't know the difference. Jim smelt it, and bit it, and rubbed it, and said he would manage so the hair-ball would think it was good. He said he would split open a raw Irish potato and stick the quarter in between and keep it there all night, and next morning you couldn't see no brass, and it wouldn't feel greasy no more, and so anybody in town would take it in a minute, let alone a hair-ball." 16 This picturesque wonder, slyness, and gullibility are evident all through the long, idyllic journey on the raft with the no-less superstitious (and guileful) Huck. The latter is amazed at the extent of Jim's knowledge of signs and portents; he learns not to doubt in their efficacy: consider all the bad luck that follows his touching a snakeskin! Jim had warned him! In fact, "Jim knowed all kinds of signs. He said he knowed most every thing. . . ." 17

The extent of this superstition could be

illustrated over and over again. In it is none of Uncle Tom's rather pathetic faith in God, none of the dignity of a strong spiritual nature.

Again, Jim is not a very apt or docile pupil, though Huck often tries to enlighten him about various matters. One of the most amusing scenes in the book shows the slave's obstinacy in the matter of language. He cannot be made to understand that different people have different ways of speaking: Huck asks, ". . . why ain't it natural and right for a *Frenchman* to talk different from us? You answer me that."

"Is a cat a man, Huck?"

"No."

"Well, den, dey ain't no sense in a cat talkin' like a man. Is a cow a man—er is a cow a cat?"

"No she ain't either of them."

"Well, den, she ain't got no business to talk like either one er the yuther of 'em. Is a Frenchman a man?"

"Yes."

"Well, den! Dad blame it, why doan' he talk like a man? You answer me dat!"

"I see it warn't no use wastin' words. . ." 18

But Jim has not lived among people such as the Kentucky Shelbys, nor the New Orleans St. Clares. He has not been taught, by precept and example, the lessons of high-mindedness which so benefitted Uncle Tom, nor has he seen many persons of any education. His life has been passed in the unbelievable backwardness of a shabby, run-down river town. (The "local colorists" could well claim Mark Twain solely on the basis of his descriptions of the tired, dusty little towns bordering the Mississippi. Who can forget the shanties so near the water that eventually the river encroaches on their very foundations? Or that even the best houses may have a bed in the parlor? Who can forget the rutted streets with pigs esconcing themselves in the mud, the loafers leaning against the store chewing tobacco, bestirring themselves only at sound of a dog fight?). Any religious teaching Jim has ever known has been (perhaps) the hard-bitten Calvinism of Miss Watson, and (certainly) the hysterical debauch of a camp-meeting in the back woods, one such as Huck and the King attended: "and when all the mourners had got up there to the front benches in a crowd, they sung and shouted, and flung

themselves down on the straw, just crazy and wild."

And so, because of lack of opportunity for development, Jim's mentality and his moral nature cannot be matched with those of Uncle Tom. Even so, there are interesting points of comparison between the two slaves. The first is affectionate faithfulness. To be sure, Jim runs away from his owner, and Tom does not, no matter what the provocation, but, always bearing in mind the difference in their advantages, the reader sees that Jim's loyalty shows up pretty well. Jim loves Huck, for Huck is his friend, Huck helps him escape, Huck is kind to him. And so he gives the white boy all the affection of which his simple being is capable.

When he thinks Huck, out in the canoe, is lost in the fog and drowned, he is heart-broken. After Huck gets back to the raft and succeeds for a little in making Jim think it is a dream, Jim reproaches him for his deception: " '. . . When I got all wore out wid work, en wid de callin' for you, en went to sleep, my heart wuz mos' broke bekase you wuz los', eh I didn' k'yer no mo' what become er me en de raf'. En when I wake up en fine you back agin', all safe en soun' de tears come en I could a got down on my knees en kiss' you' foot I's so thankful. . . ' " 20

All through the journey, Jim shows the same spirit. He is always ready to help Huck, to stand by. Further, he wants to protest the boy; witness, for instance, the time of the high water when the two of them climb into an empty house floating along. There is a still figure lying in a corner of the room: " 'I reck'n he's ben dead two er three days. Come in, Huck, but doan' look at his face—it's too gashly.' " 21 He knows it is Pap, but from some native delicacy he forebears telling Huck so at the time.

Then, like Uncle Tom, Jim is a loving father. Even as he gets closer and closer to freedom, he grieves for his wife and children. "He was often moaning and mourning that way nights, when he judged I was asleep, and saying, 'Po little 'Lizabeth, po' little Johnny! it's mighty hard; I spec' I ain't ever gwine to see you no mo', no mo!'" 22

And just here an extremely interesting comparison between the two novels may be pointed out. It concerns one of the prevailing attitudes of the white people toward the

colored: i. e. are the latter capable of as fine feeling as the former? Mrs. Stowe is very firm about this, for to her one of the cruellest features of slavery is the parting of husbands from wives, of parents from children. She shows two ladies discussing the matter: " 'Suppose, ma'am, your two children, there, should be taken from you, and sold?' "

" 'We can't reason from our feelings to those of this class of person,' said the other lady . . .

" 'Indeed, ma'am, you can know nothing of them, if you say so,' answered the first lady, warmly. 'I was born and brought up among them. I know they *do* feel, as keenly—even more so, perhaps—as we do.' " 23

Later on Marie St. Clare says, " 'Now, St Clare really has talked to me as if keeping Mammy from her husband was like keeping me from mine. There's no comparing in this way. Mammy couldn't have the feelings that I should. It's a different thing altogether,—of course, it is,—and yet St. Clare pretends not to see it. And just as if Mammy could love her little dirty babies as I love Eva!' " 24 And Eva, overcome with pity, tells her father that " 'these poor creatures love their children as much as you do me.' " 25

Mark Twain does not spend so long a time as Mrs. Stowe does—nor so much emotion—on the subject. But he as cutting in his dry irony. Huck Finn, the poor wail with nothing but a degenerate, vicious drunkard for a "family," says wonderingly of Jim: "I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for their'n. It don't seem naural, but I reckon it's so."

And this leads to the most important conclusion of all: Uncle Tom and "Nigger" Jim with all their obvious differences have a similar effect upon the white people about them. Both inspire a strong loyalty—and love. In Uncle Tom's case it is the love of many, of the Sheldys, of St Clare, of Eva. And even the brutal Simon Legree is momentarily shaken by the colored man's unwavering kindness and spiritual strength. It is somehow comforting to the reader to know that "Young Mas'r George" gets to him just before he dies: " 'Is it possible,—is it possible?' said he, kneeling down by him. 'Uncle Tom, my poor, poor old friend . . .

" 'Bless the Lord! it is,—it is,—it's all I wanted! They haven't forgot me. . . Now

I shall die content. . .” 27

As for Jim, it is apparent at once that Huckleberry Finn has for him a steady, if unacknowledged, devotion. It breaks out, now and then, in such a statement as “He was a mighty good nigger, Jim was. . . 28, and “he was most always right; he had an uncommon level head. . .” 29

The best illustration of all, of course, is the famous argument Huck has with himself: Shall he go against what is “right” and aid in Jim’s escape? Or shall he let Miss Watson know where her property is? Everyone knows the outcome: “But somehow I couldn’t seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind. I’d see him standing my watch on top of his’n, stead of calling me, so I could go on sleeping; . . . and would always call me honey, and pet me, and do everything he could think of for me, and how good he always was. . . I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself: All right, then, I’ll go to hell. . .” 30

But even harder hearts than young George Shelby’s and Huck’s are touched by these slaves. Uncle Tom has a effect on Legree, depraved as he is; he does not change him, but there is a moment when the white man wavers: “Legree stood aghast, and looked at Tom; and there was such a silence that the tick of the old clock could be heard, measuring, with silent touch, the last moments of mercy and probation to that hardened heart.

“It was but a moment. There was one hesitating pause,—one irresolute, relenting thrill,—and the spirit of evil came back, with sevenfold vehemence. . .” 31

As for Jim, his stern mistress frees him before she dies: according to Tom Sawyer, “Old Miss Watson died two months ago, and she was ashamed she ever was going to sell him down the river, and said so; and she set him free in her will” 32

This study may prove very little; it may only show a coincidence not at all rare in literary history. On the other hand there may be something very significant in the fact that two of America’s most popular novelists use a helpless slave as the means to probe the ills of society. It does not matter that Mrs. Stowe is denunciatory and mili-

tant, while Mark Twain is slyly ironic. The fact remains that both *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Huckleberry Finn* need Uncle Tom and Jim to drive home their messages. And, with all their differences, it has been seen that these two men have remarkable similarities: they stand together. American literature would be much poorer without them.

1 It is interesting to note that in the year *Huckleberry Finn* was published (1885) a new edition of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was issued. This new edition contains a long introduction by the author, telling of the reaction to her book all over the world, including transcriptions of laudatory letters from various noted persons. A point to keep in mind is that the time of *Huckleberry Finn* was set “forty or fifty years ago” which in 1885 would make its action take place not long before that of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which came out in 1852.

2 Robert A. Lively, *Fiction Fights the Civil War*, Chapel Hill, The Uni. of North Carolina Press, 1957, p. 7.

3 Carl Van Doren, *The American Novel*, New York, The MacMillan Co., 1940, p. 110.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 151.

5 *Uncle Tom’s Cabins*, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, Co., 1885, p. xiv.

6 *Ibid.*, p. iv.

7 *Huckleberry Finn*, New York, Charles L. Webster and Co., 1885.

8 P. 2.

9 P. 24.

10 P. 392.

11 P. 425.

12 P. 462.

13 P. 200.

14 P. 24.

15 To be just with Mrs. Stowe, she did not endow any of her other slave-characters with so noble a character. She shows a great many servants, and they run the gamut from the reasonably honest through the frivolous and irresponsible to the downright vicious and evil.

16 P. 37.

17 P. 71.

18 P. 114.

19 P. 173 This is another excellent example of “local color.” Mrs. Stowe describes a similar camp meeting in a later novel, *DRED*.

20 P. 121.

21 P. 77.

22 P. 201.

23 *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Pp 137, 138.

24 P. 194.

25 P. 309.

26 *Huckleberry Finn*, P. 201.

27 *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Pp. 466, 467.

28 *Huckleberry Finn*, P. 201.

29 P. 109.

30 Pp. 271, 272.

31 *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, P. 461.

32 *Huckleberry Finn*, P. 361.

STATE OF NEVADA
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
CARSON CITY

30th November, 1960

A Proclamation by the Governor

WHEREAS, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, known to millions the world over as the immortal Mark Twain, first arrived in Nevada on August 14, 1861, and

WHEREAS, during his stay in Nevada, he underwent the experiences and gained the knowledge which placed him among the great writers, lecturers and philosophers of this nation, and

WHEREAS, his writings in "Roughing It" and other works gave the world its first real portrayal of early Nevada and the exciting days of the old West.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GRANT SAWYER, Governor of the State of Nevada, by the power in me vested, do hereby proclaim

THE YEAR 1961
as
NEVADA MARK TWAIN
CENTENNIAL YEAR

and I call upon all public spirited citizens in general, and especially those in particular who dwell in communities where Mark Twain resided in Nevada, and those in trades or professions in which Mark Twain labored while in Nevada to make special appropriate observances of this Centennial Year;

And also those in the fields of education, libraries, museums and public information.

Grant Sawyer, Governor

By The Governor,
John Koontz, Secretary of State

